

Ancient Buddhist Statuettes and a Candēlla Copper-plate from the Bāndā District.—By VINCENT A. SMITH, I. C. S., and WILLIAM HOEY, D. LITT., I. C. S.

(With five plates.)

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PART I.

The village on the south bank of the Jumna in the Pailānī Tahsīl of the Bāndā District in the North-Western Provinces, which is officially known as Icchāwar, and popularly as Nicchāwar, marks the site of one of the ancient towns of Bundēlkhand.

The ruins on the west side of the modern village are known by the name of Dhanēsar Khērā. Remains of a large building with a plastered floor are here traceable, and an image is venerated as Dhansir Dāi. The statue is that of a bearded man, seated on a cushion, with one leg drawn up, and wearing a cap and waistcloth, or short drawers. A sword hangs by his side. The long, flowing hair is coiled up behind over the shoulders. The ears are long, and adorned with earrings. The hands are folded, and seem to hold a casket. The same name, Dhansir Dāi, is applied to a group of figures, one male, and three female, at Pardāwā in the Mau Tahsīl of the same district. Pardāwā, we may note in passing, is an interesting site which would probably repay detailed examination.

The mounds about a mile south-east of Icchāwar are called Dhanī Khērā. The buildings there originally surrounded a considerable lake about thirty acres in extent, which is now dry. This lake is sometimes called the Bahi Tāl, and sometimes the Madan Sāgar. The latter name, which is also applied to the lake in the town of Mahoba, and is there a memorial of the powerful Candēlla king, Madana-varman, appears at Icchāwar to commemorate Madana-pāla-çarmman, the *sēnapati*, or general, of king Paramarddi-dēva, the grandson and successor of Madana-varman. This seems to be the natural inference from the fact that the copper-plate inscription recording the bestowal of the village Nandinī-grāma on the *sēnapati* was found in the ruins near the dry lake.

This inscription is recorded on two plates, which are now the property of Dr. Hoey. (Plate VII.) Each plate is about $13\frac{1}{4}$ inches long by $10\frac{1}{4}$ broad. The plates were formerly connected by a seal which has been lost. A hole for the attachment of the seal is pierced at the bottom of the first, and at the top of the second plate, so that the plates should lie back to back. Copper rivets, some of which still remain, were also inserted in the edges of each plate. These seem to have been intended to attach each plate separately to a wall, and were probably inserted after the loss of the seal.

The inscription on the first plate consists of 17 lines, of which the first four are interrupted in the middle by the insertion of a rude sketch of the four-armed goddess Lakṣmī, with an elephant on each side sprinkling her.¹ The date occurs in the thirteenth line. The last two lines are interrupted in the middle by the hole for the seal.

The inscription on the second plate consists of 18 lines, of which the first two are interrupted in the middle by the hole for the seal.

The characters are those usual in the Candēlla inscriptions of the period. The record, though not protected by raised edges to the plates, is in good preservation, and every letter is legible.

The purpose of the inscription is to record the gift, on the usual terms, of a village named Nandiṇī-grāma, in the district of Nandāvaṇa, to the *sēnapati*, Ṣrī Madana-pāla-ṣarmman, who is described as a Bhaṭṭa of Naugāva; a member of the Kṛṣṇātrēya *gōtra*, son of Ṭhakkura Ṣrī Mahēṣvara, grandson of Ṭhakkura Ṣrī Bhoṇapāla, and great grandson of Ṭhakkura Ṣrī Tihuṇapāla. The gift is recited to have been made at Ṣrī Bilāsa-pura on the fifteenth day of the bright half of the month Srāvaṇa, at the time of an eclipse of the moon, in the year 1228 (Vikrama), = A. D. 1177. The donor was *Parama bhaṭṭāraka, mahārājādhirāja, parameṣvara, paramamāheṣvara Ṣrī Kālañjarādhīpati Ṣrīmat Paramarddi-dēva*, who was the successor of Madana-varmma-dēva, who was the successor of Pṛthivī-varmma-dēva.

The modern village, Nandan Dēo, a few miles distant from Dhanī Khērā where the copper-plates were found, probably represents the Nandiṇī-grāma of the inscription. It is visited by pilgrims, but Dr. Hoey had not an opportunity of inspecting the place and learning further particulars. Bilāsa-pura, where the grant was made, has not been identified.

The copper-plate now published is the fourth Candēlla inscription on copper known to exist. Two plates found at Nunaura (Nanyaura)

¹ The same device is inserted in the Augāsī copper-plate of Madana-varman, grandfather and immediate predecessor of Paramardi-dēva (*J. A. S., B.*, Vol. XLVII, Pt. I, p. 73).

in the Hamīrpur District belong respectively to the reigns of Dēva-varmma-dēva (S. 1107) and Dhanga (S. 1055).¹ The third plate is a record of Madana-varmma-dēva, dated S. 1190.²

A fifth copper-plate inscription of the reign of Vīra-varmman, dated S. 1337, and known as the Dāhi copper-plate, which belonged to Colonel Ellis, was lost in the Mutiny.³

The numerous other inscriptions of the Candēlla kings are on stone.

Several inscriptions of the reign of Paramarddi-dēva are known.

A single line record on a pedestal at Mahoba, dated S. 1224, is mentioned by Cunningham, and seems to have contained the king's name. This inscription has not been published, and the original seems to have disappeared.⁴

The Mahoba inscription, dated S. 1240, certainly belongs to Paramarddi-dēva's reign, though his name has been lost.⁵

The Kālañjar inscription, supposed to be dated in S. 1258, requires re-editing. It certainly mentions Paramarddi-dēva.

The Madanapur inscriptions record the fact of the conquest of Paramarddi by Pṛthivī Rāja Cāhumāna (Chauhan) in S. 1239, = A.D. 1182.

An inscription at Khajurāho dated S. 1234, and two at Ajaygarh, dated respectively 1237 and 1243, (Nos. 46 and 50 of Cunningham's list), belong to the reign of Paramarddi, though they do not seem to mention his name.⁶

The only inscription mentioning Paramarddi by name, and recorded during his reign, which has been properly edited, is the Bagrāri stone inscription.

“The proper object of the inscription is to record (in verses 25–29) that Sallakṣaṇa, the minister of the king Paramarddi-dēva built a temple of Viṣṇu, and a temple of Śiva at which the inscription was put up; and that this second temple was completed by Puruṣōttama, the son

¹ V. A. Smith and Bābū Prannath Paṇḍit in *J. As. Soc., Bengal*, Vol. XLVII, Part I (1878), p. 80.

² Rajēndralāla Mitra, *A copper-plate grant from Bāndā*; *ibid.* p. 73, Pl. VI.

³ Cunningham, *Archæol. Reports*, Vol. II, p. 455; Vol. XXI, No. 58, pp. 83, 87.

⁴ Cunningham, *Reports*, Vol. II, pp. 447, 448; Vol. XXI, No. 44, p. 82; V. A. Smith, *History of Bundelkhand*, *J. A. S., B.*, Vol. L, Part I (1881), p. 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*; *ibid.*

⁶ Madanpur is in the Lalitpur Subdivision of the Jhānsī District of the North-Western Provinces (*Arch. Rep.* Vol. X, p. 98, Pl. XXXII; Vol. XXI, p. 173).

The other inscriptions referred to are noticed in the works already cited. The king's name is written Paramarddi, or Paramardi. So the name Varma may be written as Varmma, or in the stem form as Varman.

of Sallakṣaṇa and his successor in the office of minister, after the death of his father.

And by way of introduction the inscription gives the genealogy of the king, and (in verses 14-24) that of his ministers. All that we learn regarding the former is that from Atri's eye sprang the moon, and from the moon the Candrātrēya princes; that one of them was Madana-varman, whose son was Yaçō-varman, whose son again was the ruling prince Paramardi-dēva."¹

This record alone informs us that Paramarḍdi, the Parmāl of tradition, although the immediate successor of the famous king Madana-varman, was yet the grandson, not the son, of that monarch. The order of regnal succession was certainly Pṛthivī-varman, Madana-varman, Paramarḍdi-varman, as given in the Icchāwar plate and the Ajaygarh stone inscription of Vīra-varman. The lost Dāhi copper-plate also gave the name of Madana-varman as that of Paramarḍdi-dēva's predecessor. It is evident that Yaçō-varman never reigned.

The bardic lists (*Arch. Rep.* II, 449) all insert a Kīrtti-varman between Madana and Paramardi. The words *Yaçō* and *Kīrtti* being synonymous, the entry in the lists is probably due to a reminiscence that Paramardi was the grandson of Madana-varman.

The latest known inscription of Madana-varman is dated S. 1220, =A.D. 1163. The earliest inscription of Paramardi is dated S. 1224, =A.D. 1167. It is, therefore safe to assume A.D. 1165 as the beginning of Paramardi's reign.

The Icchāwar inscription is dated S. 1228, =A.D. 1171. The reign of Paramardi ended in A.D. 1202, when he capitulated to Kutbud-dīn Ībak, dying before the surrender was effected. He was succeeded by Trailōkya-varman, who temporarily delivered his dominions from the Muḥammadan invaders.² Dr. Hoey possesses a unique copper coin of Trailōkya-varman, which we hope to publish soon.

¹ Kielhorn, *Baṭēśvar Stone Inscription of Paramardi-dēva*, (*Epigr. Ind.* Vol. I. p. 20). In a note the editor points out that the label attributing the stone to Baṭēṣvar in the Agra district seems to be wrong, and that the inscription is probably No. 52 of Cunningham's list (*Arch. Rep.* XXI. p. 82), which was found in two pieces on the bank of the lake at Bagrāri. There can be no doubt that the so called Baṭēṣvar inscription is really that found at Bagrāri, which like it had 24 lines, and was in two pieces. A Candēlla stone inscription could not have been found near Agra. Bagrāri is a village, in Bundēlkhaṇḍ. We have failed to discover its exact position.

² "Then the prince Trailōkya-varman ruled the kingdom, a very creator in providing strong places. Like Viṣṇu, he was, in lifting up the earth, immersed in the ocean formed by the streams of Turuṣkas." l. 5 of *Ajajgarh Inscription of Vīra-varman* (*Epigr. Indica*, Vol. I. p. 329). Professor Kielhorn's excellent editions of several of the Candēlla inscriptions throw much light on the history of Bundēlkhaṇḍ, which requires to be revised.

PART II.

Three early brass statuettes of the Buddha found in the ruins of Dhanōsar Khērā to the west of Icchāwar, and purchased by Dr. Hoey, are of sufficient interest to deserve detailed description.

The material of the statuettes appears to be brass, though it may be the special alloy known as *ashṭadhātu*, or 'the eight metals.' "Copper was never very largely used in the fabrication of statuary, and bronze never, that alloy being held impure. Brass is more readily melted; it has a more attractive colour; it takes a finer polish, and is firmer, more malleable, less liable to rust, and more easily wrought than copper.

It has, therefore, been generally preferred as a material for ornamental figures. In the formation of the statues of gods, it is also very largely employed; but in such cases it is alloyed with small quantities of other metals, *viz.*, gold, silver, iron, tin, lead, and mercury; making with the copper and zinc of brass, eight; which is esteemed the purest alloy, and prized very highly as *ashṭadhātu*."¹

The two larger statuettes (Nos. I and II) are inscribed; the smallest one (No. III) has no inscription.

The standing figure No. I (Plate VIII) is much the better executed of the two larger images, and possesses some merit as a work of art. It closely resembles many of the Gāndhāra sculptures, and, in our judgment, shows distinct traces of Hellenistic influence. Buddha stands in a preaching attitude, holding in his left hand a palm leaf or birch bark scroll. His right hand is open, and raised in admonition. His dress consists of a robe, open at the neck, covering both shoulders, and of an under garment, which appears below. This under garment appears to be a pair of wide drawers, such as are now called a "divided skirt," though it may possibly be an undivided skirt. The feet are bare. The head is covered with the hair arranged in a mat of conventional curls, gathered above into a top-knot. The earrings are long and heavy. The drapery is well executed, and the form of the body is well shown through the clothing. The hands are moulded with considerable skill; a large circular aureole is attached to a projection at the back of the head.

The figure stands on a well designed pedestal, which rests on four claws.

The principal dimensions are as follows:—

Height (including pedestal) to surface of top-knot	...	13''·625
Total height to top of aureole	...	14''·725

¹ Rājēndralāla Mītra, *Antiquities of Orissa*, Vol. I, p. 67.

Height of figure, from surface of pedestal to surface				
of top-knot ...	...	...	...	10''·50
Diameter of aureole	...	...	...	5''·75

The inscription consists of a single line of ancient Nāgarī characters incised on the convex moulding of the pedestal, and running round all four sides. The characters are in some respects peculiar in form, and a few of them are difficult to read, though well-preserved. They are of an early type, and, we should think, not later than A.D. 300. The facsimile, prepared from an inked *estampage*, (Plate IX) will enable the reader to form his own opinion as to their age. The convexity of the moulding, and the shallowness of the engraving cause some difficulty in obtaining a copy of the inscription, which reads as follows:—

*Dēyadharmōyaṃ upāsikā Bēdi—
kāyā yadatra puṇyaṃ
tad bhavatu mātā pitrō sarvva satvā—
nāṃ anuttara jñānavāptayē.*

“This is the meritorious gift of the female worshipper Bēdikāyā; whatever religious merit there is in it, let it be for the attainment of supreme knowledge by her father and mother, and by all sentient beings.”

This formula, with some slight modifications, is found in three of the later inscriptions in the caves at Kuḍā, forty-five miles south of Bombay.

The earliest inscriptions at Kuḍā, which may perhaps date from the first century B.C., are in the Pālī language and simply record that such and such an article is the gift (or “meritorious gift”) of so and so. The prayer that the merit of the gift may be for the attainment of supreme knowledge by the donor’s parents and all sentient creatures is wanting. That prayer is found in the later inscriptions, which, like those on Dr. Hoey’s statuettes, are in the Sanskrit language. The Buddhists of the earlier Hīnayāna sect used Pālī. The members of the later Mahāyāna sect used Sanskrit.

In order to show how closely the inscriptions on the statuettes follow the Kuḍā pattern, we quote No. 7 of the Kuḍā inscriptions:—

*Dēyadharmōyaṃ Ṣākhyaōpā—
sikā Vyāghrakāyā yad atra
puṇyaṃ tadbhavatu mātāpitṛpū—
rvvaṅgamaṃ kṛtvā sarvvasatvānāṃ anuttarajñā—
nāvāptayē.¹*

¹ The Kuḍā inscriptions are discussed by Dr. Burgess (assisted by Dr. Bühler) in Volume IV. of the *Archæological Survey of Western India*, ‘Report on the Bud-

The inscription of the statuette of the seated Buddha (No. II.) includes (excepting the word *krtvā*) the portion of the formula which has been omitted from the dedication of the standing image.

This second statuette, that of the seated Buddha (Plate X), is almost destitute of merit as a work of art, and is an ordinary Indian production of conventional pattern. Buddha is exhibited squatting, with the soles of his feet turned up, and holding the little finger of his left hand between the first finger and thumb of the right hand. The shoulders are square, and the general appearance of the image resembles that of mediæval Jain statues. But, unlike the Jain images, Buddha is not nude. He is clothed in close-fitting garments, the existence of which is indicated only by the opening for the neck, and the termination of the sleeves and drawers. No attempt is made to express the folds of the clothing. The hands are stiffly and clumsily moulded, and the face is expressionless. The æsthetic demerits of the work are so striking that, if it were not inscribed, a late date might be assigned to it. But the characters of the inscription, though somewhat later in form than those on the pedestal of the standing figure, are probably not later than A.D. 400, and certainly not later than A.D. 500.

A rectangular plate, surmounted by a circular aureole, is attached to a projection at the back of the head.

The principal dimensions are:—

Height, including pedestal, to surface of top-knot	...	12''·50
Total height to top of aureole	... ..	14''·00
Height of figure, from surface of pedestal to surface of top-knot	... ..	9''·50
Diameter of aureole	... ..	5''·40

The inscription is in two lines on the front moulding only of the pedestal. (Plate IX.) Some of the letters are difficult to read, and a few are to us doubtful. The record is as follows, subject, perhaps, to some slight correction.

¹ *Deyadharmmōyaṃ Guptavaṃṣōdita Ṣrī Haridāssya rajñī Mahādēvyāḥ yadatra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu.*

² *Sarva satvānām mātā pitṛ pūrvāṅgamaṇām anuttarapada jñānārāptayē.*

dhist Cave Temples and their Inscriptions. (London, 1883) pp. 12–14, 85, 86; Plates XLV, XLVI. Nos. 7, 8, 9 of Plate XLV. resemble the dedications of the statuettes in language, and to a large extent in alphabetical characters. They are supposed to date from the fifth or sixth century A.D. The Mathurā inscription of the Gupta year 135 (A.D. 453) has the formula *Dēyadharmōyaṃ vīhārasvaminīyā Dēvtāyā yadatra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu mātāpitṛḥ sarvasattvānāṅca anuttarajñānārāptayē.* (Fleet, p. 263.)

This seems to mean that the donor was Mahādēvī, the wife, or queen, of Ṣrī Haridāsa of the Gupta race. The name Haridāsa, with the cerebral *ḍ*, is curious, but it seems impossible to read the name otherwise. Many of the characters, especially those in the second line, are very rudely incised, and imperfectly formed.

The epithet *Guptavaṃṣōdita*, 'sprung from the Gupta race,' or the 'race of Gupta,' is interesting. It apparently means that the donor was a member of the family of the sovereigns of the great Gupta dynasty. The words *Guptavaṃṣa* are most naturally translated, 'the race of Gupta,' that is to say the race of which Gupta was the progenitor. Sir Alexander Cunningham to the last (*Coins of Med. India*, p. 9) believed that the word Gupta as a proper name could not stand alone, because it was impossible that a past participle meaning 'protected' could itself be treated as a name without mention of the protecting deity. The citation by Drs. Fleet and Bühler of the names Upagupta and Upaguptā failed to change Cunningham's opinion. The dedication on the statuette is a strong confirmation of the view that the name of the progenitor of the famous dynasty was simply 'Gupta,' i.e., 'protected' [by the gods], and not 'Ṣrī Gupta,' 'protected by Lakṣmī.'

Several of the published inscriptions use Gupta as a family name in the phrase *Guptanṛparājyabhuktau* (*Fleet*, p. 102, etc.), 'during the enjoyment of sovereignty by the Gupta kings.' So the Girnār inscription speaks of the 'Gupta era' (*Guptaparakāla*), and the Mōrbī inscription uses the adjective *Gaupta*. (Bühler, *on the Origin of the Gupta-Valabhi Era*, pp. 6-9.)

The English phrases 'Gupta dynasty' and 'Gupta era' are thus fully justified by Sanskrit precedent. The third statuette (No. III) is very small, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and has no pedestal. Probably a pedestal existed, which has been lost. The stand shown in the photograph (Plate XI) is a wooden one made by the owner. The aureole, of which the upper part is broken off, is arranged as an oval shield the full length of the figure. The right hand is lost. The drapery is arranged like that of the large standing figure No. I, though the attitude slightly differs. The artistic execution, though better than that of No. II, is inferior to that of No. I.